

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY FORM

NR Eligible: yes ☐
no ☐

Property Name: Riggs-Thompson House
(Holy Names Convent-Academy) Inventory Number: M:36/8

Address: 711 Pershing Drive City: Silver Spring Zip Code: 20815

County: Montgomery USGS Topographic Map: Washington West quadrangle

Owner: The Chelsea School Is the property being evaluated a district? ☐ yes

Tax Parcel Number: N018 Tax Map Number: JN33 Tax Account ID Number: 52-1072280

Project: Window replacement-MCCBL 2003,
Community Based Regional Initiative Loan,
Item G319; Chapter 204, Acts of 2003 Agency: General Assembly

Site visit by MHT Staff: ☒ no ☐ yes Name: _____ Date: _____

Is the property located within a historic district? ☐ yes ☒ no

If the property is within a district

District Inventory Number: _____

NR-listed district ☐ yes Eligible district ☐ yes District Name: _____

Preparer's Recommendation: Contributing resource ☐ yes ☐ no Non-contributing but eligible in another context ☐

If the property is not within a district (or the property is a district)

Preparer's Recommendation: Eligible ☒ yes ☐ no

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ None

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: MIHP Form M: 36/8; 1998 and 2008 Addenda

Description of Property and Eligibility Determination: *(Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map and photo)*

The Riggs-Thompson House, a frame Italianate house (1866) constructed around an earlier French Second Empire (ca. 1858) cottage, is a rare surviving example of country retreats that prominent Washington residents constructed in Silver Spring near Sligo Creek in the mid-nineteenth century. It meets National Register Criterion A because of its association with settlement patterns that Silver Spring's country house-era development represents. It is also a rare surviving example of the country seats that constituted Silver Spring's pre-suburban development. The period of significance for the house is 1858 – 1923 and spans the period that the Riggs and Thompson families occupied the property.

Although the house is associated with George Riggs, the nationally significant founder of Riggs Bank, and with William Thompson, an important local figure, the property does not rise to the level of significance that National Register Criterion B demands. The Riggs family occupied the Silver Spring house, the smallest of their country properties, less than 10 years. Riggs Bank, the Corn-Riggs House in Washington, D.C., and Green Hill, the Prince

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST REVIEW

Eligibility recommended ☒ Eligibility not recommended ☐

Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D Considerations: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G ☐ None

Comments: _____

Jonathan Bayler
Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

P. McIntyre
Reviewer, NR Program

9/3/08

Date

8/29/08

Date

200802567

**MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIBILITY REVIEW FORM**

Continuation Sheet No. 1

M: 36-8

George's County country retreat to which the Riggs family moved from the Riggs-Thompson House, are all extant and are more closely associated with George Riggs and with the Riggs family. The house is not associated with William Thompson's active life since he was retired when he and his wife purchased the property.

While the setting of the Riggs-Thompson House has changed from its period of significance and the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SHNJM) added an Annex to the building in the 1940s, the house still retains sufficient integrity to convey both its historic associations and its earlier architectural character. In a pattern typical of former country residences now located in the midst of residential development, most of the original property's 143 acres have been subdivided and developed as single family housing. The house and its remaining 4.3 acre property were converted to a school and convent in the 1930s. The Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary also constructed a classroom building in 1951 followed shortly by the addition of an auditorium now used as a gymnasium. Neither the Annex nor the later buildings contribute to the significance of the resource. The property remains in use as the Chelsea School, a private school serving students with learning disabilities.

Integrity considerations

The Riggs-Thompson House and the immediate setting included within the Montgomery County historic designation (2008 MIHP Addendum - Attachment B - Approved Environmental Setting) retain integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The house remains in its original location with sufficient grounds to preserve its character as a free-standing house on property more generous than the far smaller lots associated with recent houses. Its orientation contrasts with the 20th century houses associated with suburban street patterns and reinforces its association with country life in a past era. While the house incorporates two different construction periods, its design preserves its informal, domestic character. The survival of its prominent porch, its asymmetry, and the juxtaposition of Italianate and French Second Empire architectural features all contribute to its architectural character as a country house - a comfortable secondary residence dedicated to leisurely pursuits. The house is clearly not a utilitarian farmhouse nor is it a high style residence designed with an eye to impressing the beholder. The mid-20th century additions do not impair the architectural character of the design of the house. The Annex is attached to the rear of the house. The hyphen is clearly secondary to the house and separates it from the Annex, which is of similar size, scale, and materials as the Riggs-Thompson House. While the Classroom Building and Auditorium/Gymnasium are larger and employ different scale and materials, their siting mitigates their effect on the house.

The Chelsea School's work on the exterior of the Riggs-Thompson House has restored the materials and workmanship of the original structure. The frame exterior with its wood siding dating from different construction campaigns is now visible. The workmanship that the incised and beaded porch columns, the 19th c. windows, the shutters, and the drop siding represent is still evident. The restoration of the original frame exterior of the Riggs-Thompson House is particularly important to its integrity since the material speaks to the rural character of the house and contrasts with 20th century masonry construction that 20th century fire codes for dense settlement require. While the Mansart roof no longer retains its slate shingles, its prominent shape speaks to the architectural character of the Riggs cottage.

Even with the small setting included with the Montgomery County Approved Environmental Setting, the Riggs-Thompson House retains integrity of feeling and association. It still sits as an entity apart from surrounding suburban development, distinguished by its size, scale, design, and materials. Clearly the product of a different era, the house survives to represent the country house phase of settlement in Silver Spring. The observer

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
NR-ELIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Continuation Sheet No. 2

M:36-8

progresses through the central business district of downtown Silver Spring past early 21st century development spurred by Metro, through modest mid-20th century suburban development, and travels on Ellsworth Drive to a large 21st century mall complete with Whole Foods Market to find, not one mile away, a house that transports the observer to an earlier time and place.

Please see July 2008 Addendum to MIHP Form M:36/8 for additional information.

Prepared by: Betty Bird
Betty Bird & Associates LLC

Date Prepared: July 2008

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 7
Page 1

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

The Riggs-Thompson House (ca. 1858-ca. 1866 with later additions), now owned by Chelsea School, is situated on a 4.87 acre parcel between Ellsworth Drive, Springvale Avenue, and Pershing Drive. The property encompasses four interconnected buildings: the Riggs-Thompson House and its Annex (1940s)¹, the Classroom Building (1951), and Auditorium/Gymnasium (after 1951). The school complex, formerly associated with the Holy Names Academy and Convent, is nestled within three residential streets with modest, ca. 1950s one-story dwellings only two blocks from the large-scale late 20th century and early 21st century development in downtown Silver Spring. The present appearance of the site reflects its use as a parochial school from 1933 through 1988. All of the mid-20th century buildings are connected by means internal corridors housed within brick hyphens. Chelsea School carefully rehabilitated the Riggs-Thompson House in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in 2003.

DESCRIPTION

Site

The 4.87 acre site sits within the triangle of land between the major streets of Colesville Avenue and Wayne Avenue immediately above Fenton Street. The site slopes sharply down to the north (Ellsworth Avenue), the former location of a branch of Sligo Creek, now channeled under the street.² There is a drop of approximately 40 ft. between Pershing Drive, which runs along the south side of the site, and Ellsworth Avenue on the north. The present steep drive from Ellsworth Street once terminated in a ca. 1940 brick garage that Chelsea School demolished ca. 2001. The Riggs-Thompson House faces the rear facades of the houses on Cedar Avenue to the west. The Annex and Classroom Building face south onto Pershing Drive and the Auditorium/Gymnasium faces east onto Springvale Road.

¹ The Annex, which appears in a 1963 Sanborn Fire insurance map, is not depicted in the 1941 Klinge Real Estate Atlas. Its appearance and the manner in which it is connected with the 1951 Classroom Building makes it likely that it was constructed in the 1940s.

² This MIHP Addendum follows the convention for orientation used in the earlier MIHP form and Addendum for the Riggs-Thompson House. Streets run from southwest to northeast and northwest to southeast.

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 7
Page 2

Riggs-Thompson House

The Riggs-Thompson House is a compound building consisting of four blocks: the 3-story, T-shaped, brick, Mansart-roof cottage; the 1-story frame north wing; the 2-story frame front block; and a 1-story frame south wing. One-story porches project from the north and west facades. Exterior chimneys remain visible against the north and south face of the Mansart roof.

Cottage (ca. 1858 – Riggs period)

The T-shaped brick Mansart roof cottage, the earliest portion of the house that the Riggs family constructed, is largely obscured by later additions. The Mansart roof and interior end chimneys can be seen above the later additions; a small portion of the east wall adjacent to the north wing also remains visible. The stair hall projects into a rectangular bay that extends east from the center of the east wall, forming the base of the T. There is no direct external access to the original brick cottage. The east wall of the north wing occupies the same wall plane as the east wall of the brick cottage and completely obscures its north wall. The 2-story frame front block extends across the west wall of the original structure; a shallow, frame addition across the south side of the cottage houses toilets. The Annex abuts the base of the T of the Riggs-Thompson House on the east. Dormer windows below shallow arches punctuate the Mansart roof. The brick block has 2-over-2 wood windows. A frame cornice with block modillions unifies the brick block and the 2-story frame front block. The marble mantel on the north wall of the 1st floor, the only one that remains in the cottage portion of the house, probably dates to the Riggs occupancy. Some of the paneled doors as well as the center hall plan and stair may also date to this early period.

North Wing

The 1-story rectangular frame north wing is aligned with the east wall of the brick cottage; the west façade is recessed slightly from the wall plane of the west façade of the front block. The north wing exhibits more attention to form and architectural detail than the south wing does. Shallow, pedimented rectangular bays project from the east and west ends of the rectangle; a deep porch supported by four rectangular posts projects from the north. (Chelsea School replaced an earlier, deteriorated 20th c. porch with a metal roof with a frame feature of similar configuration.) A gable roof with its ridge running east to west tops the north wing. The wing has full height openings on all three exposed sides. Paired triple-hung six-over-six openings are centered in the shallow projecting bays at the east and west ends of the building. There are two

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 7
Page 3

glazed doors with multiple lights on the north façade under the porch. The north wing features the same projecting cornice with modillion blocks that unifies the brick cottage and frame addition. The interior of the north wing is a single room displaying recent finishes that Chelsea School installed when it rehabilitated the building in 2003.

Front block

The irregular massing of the Italianate 2-story frame front block adheres to the basic proportions of a long rectangle. The window and door openings of this five bay block, as well as its two chimneys, are irregularly spaced. This articulation reflects the additive pattern of the massing contributing to the length of the façade. The primary entrance to the house is situated on the west façade. The south end of the front block features a projecting 2nd floor octagonal bay. A tripartite frame porch extends across the west façade. Chelsea School restored this porch as part of their 2003 rehabilitation of the house. The central portion of the porch, which is supported by four columns with corner beads and incised capitals, projects outward from shallower, flanking porches to either side. Wood steps on the south provide access to the porch and to the house. There is a second set of wood steps descending to the west from the north section of the porch. These steps post-date the early 20th c. photograph. The frame block has 2-over-2 wood windows on the west and south facades. There are no openings on the north. The block extends the earlier center hall plan. The irregular placement of chimneys in the front block reflects the evolution of the form of the Riggs-Thompson House. One interior chimney is located in the northwest corner of the house. A second, exterior chimney was placed against the west wall of the front block.

South wing

The south wing is a 1-story plus basement addition attached to the south side of the 2-story frame block. The wing has a shed roof that slopes to the south. A niche projects from the center of the south wall of this wing. The south wing, which has no independent exterior access, has 2-over-2 wood windows. These windows replace full-height windows shown on the ca. 1930 photograph.

Alterations to the Riggs-Thompson House

By 1975 the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SHNJM) removed the original cornice and clad the Riggs-Thompson House and the 1940s Annex in aluminum siding. After 1975, the

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 7
Page 4

original slate fish-scale shingles gracing the Mansart roof of the brick cottage were replaced with asphalt shingles. Chelsea School reversed the better part of this damage by removing the aluminum siding and repairing the original weatherboards and drop siding. The school replaced the metal roof over the north porch with a more appropriate frame roof, restored the front porch, and reconstructed the modillioned cornice based on the surviving cornice on the north wing, shadow marks, and documentation in the historic photograph. Chelsea School also replaced the asphalt shingles on the Mansart roof with a new roof. The school opened up the site by removing the tall hedge that had obscured views of the property from Pershing Drive on the south. The ca. 1940 garage formerly situated north of the house was also removed. Significant interior architectural features such as the staircase balustrade and newel post, mantels, doors, and window and door trim were retained in the rehabilitation, which the Maryland Historical Trust certified as meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for rehabilitation. (See Attachment A – Dan Sams to Catherine Hare Foltz, October 18, 2002 – MHT Project No. 2002-293.)

Annex Building

The SHNJM added the roughly square-shaped Annex Building to the original house sometime after 1941 and before 1963, the dates of Klinge Real Estate Atlas and the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, respectively. The Annex Building, which rests on a raised basement, is a seven bay (south) x eight bay (east) frame building. A frame hyphen connects the rear of the Riggs-Thompson House to the Annex. A small screen porch was added where the Riggs-Thompson House joins the hyphen on the south; the 1st floor projects from the north side of the hyphen. There are exterior entrances on all but the west façade of the Annex Building. A small projecting porch with a triangular pediment marks the south entrance. An enclosed gabled porch aligned with the interior stair provides access to the east façade. A single set of wood steps leads to two closely-spaced utilitarian doors on the north façade of the building. All of the window openings house 2-over-2 wood windows. The north façade, which provides fire egress, is largely blind.

The interior of the Annex Building reflects its use as a convent. There is a boiler room (basement) and kitchen (1st floor) in the hyphen to the Riggs-Thompson House; a corridor with cabinets lines the north wall of the hyphen at its east end. A dog-leg stair is set against the east wall by the projecting porch. Surviving physical fabric and floor plans dating to 1980 indicate that community rooms and parlors were situated south of the stair hall. Ten cells, each with a single window, occupied the space to the north of the stair hall. Mechanical and storage closets

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 7
Page 5

centered in the residential portion established two interior corridors that opened off the stair hall. The stair against the east wall of the Annex Building has Craftsman-style square balusters and newel posts. Six-panel doors and windows are framed with simple, mitred molding.

Classroom Building

The Classroom Building, constructed in 1951, is situated at the southeast corner of the site and faces south onto Pershing Drive. The long, secondary façade of the rectangular brick annex faces east onto Springvale Road. The orange brick building, which has a flat roof, rests on a raised basement. A square stack rises from the north end of the building. Because of the downward slope to the west, the basement classrooms on the west façade of the building feature full height windows. The five-bay building originally had 4-light metal hopper windows. In 2002, the Montgomery County Fire Marshall directed Chelsea School to replace the original windows with windows that would facilitate access and evacuation in the event of fire. The metal hopper windows were replaced with 1-over-1 metal sash windows with applied muntins. Window air conditioning units project from windows; single window units have been inserted into the east and west facades.

The Classroom Building exhibits restrained ornament. Brick quoins articulate the front (south) block of the building. A projecting watertable below a soldier course extends around the building. The central entrance features a decorative reinforced concrete frontispiece. A cross punctuates the broken pediment above the entrance. Simple Doric columns support the pediment. Concrete steps with a wrought iron baluster lead from the sidewalk to the entrance.

The front portion of the interior of the building has an office and reception room on the 1st floor and a library extending the width of the 2nd floor. Classrooms are placed to either side of a central exposed concrete block corridor. In recent years some of the large classrooms have been subdivided with additional partitions into two smaller office or classroom spaces opening off of a small vestibule.

The hyphen connecting the Annex Building with the Classroom Building is a small, one-story brick feature with a flat roof. The hyphen joins the Annex mudroom with the stair core of the Classroom Building. A double door near the Annex faces the walk. The door surround displays a six-light transom set between two pilasters. Concrete steps lead from the front walk to the double doors. One of the original four-light hopper windows remains on the hyphen's rear wall

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 7
Page 6

Auditorium/Gymnasium

The Auditorium/Gymnasium, which was constructed after the Classroom Building, is a one-story, rectangular orange brick building connected to the Classroom Building by a hyphen.³ Along the south façade and the southeast corner of the building, the 1st floor of the building projects out from the larger rectangular block. Locker rooms occupy the 1st floor on the south, extending back from the hyphen. At the southeast corner, the 1st floor wraps around the main block, connecting the internal corridor in the hyphen with the projecting arcaded entrance at the front of the building. A projecting bay on the rear (west) wall of the Auditorium/Gymnasium articulates the stage at the west end of the building. Double doors at the south end of the west façade provide secondary egress at the rear of the building. The building boasts a handsome, arcaded frontispiece above two flights of concrete steps. Keystones and spring blocks set off the triple arches. Three wood double doors placed below fan-light transoms are recessed within the arches. Each of the doors has 9-lights. Similar double doors without fan-lights are placed at the secondary egress. There are three large rectangular windows centered between the four buttresses on the north wall, mirrored by similar windows between buttresses on the south wall. Small, single-light square windows lining the south wall of the 1st floor locker rooms replace earlier six-light windows.

On the interior, the Auditorium/Gymnasium has a stage against the west wall. A generous entry vestibule extends the full length of the west façade. A basketball court occupies most of the interior space.

³ One of the sisters, a long-time resident of the convent, provided information about the date of construction. (Extensive ca. 2000 notes from a site investigation found in the Montgomery County National Capital Parks & Planning Commission files.) The Auditorium/Gymnasium appears on the 1963 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map.

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 8
Page 2

HISTORIC CONTEXT

Riggs family occupancy

In the mid-19th century, prominent Washingtonians began to establish country residences in rural Montgomery County in the vicinity of Sligo Creek. In 1854, newspaper editor Francis Preston Blair established the first country seat in the area near the present intersection of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road. The Blair property was situated near the Brookville Turnpike, a section of the road from Washington, D.C. to Westminster, Maryland.

George W. Riggs (1813-1881), the founder of Riggs National Bank, purchased 140 acres in 1857. This purchase provided his family with the second of a succession of three country estates. The Riggs family had a townhouse on Eye Street in Washington, D.C. not far from the Treasury Department and the Riggs Bank. From 1842 through 1851, the Riggs family owned the Corn-Riggs House (now Anderson Cottage at the Old Soldiers Home), seat of a 256 acre estate. Financial reverses forced Riggs to sell the Corn-Riggs property in 1851. He then moved to New York to settle his father's estate, returning to head Riggs & Co. in 1854. Assessment records suggest that Riggs built the T-shaped, Mansart roof brick cottage around 1858.

When George W. Riggs constructed the house, it sat on 143 acres of land that combined 140 acres along Georgia (formerly Westminster Road) and 3 additional acres along Colesville Road. Riggs built his house on a high knoll overlooking Sligo Creek Branch (now underground), whose stream bed roughly followed Ellsworth Drive. The Hopkins Map of 1879 shows that the house faced Georgia Avenue (Washington and Brookville Turnpike). A long drive that appears to follow the course of Pershing Road joined another drive to Charles Stewart's House to utilize a common access to Georgia Avenue near what is now Wayne Avenue. Riggs kept purebred cattle on the large property.

In November 1863, George Riggs bought property in Prince George's County. From 1863 to 1936, the family occupied Green Hill, a 342 acre country estate near Riggs Road in Hyattsville. Riggs sold the Silver Spring property to Joseph and Octavia Bryan on July 21, 1864, one week after Civil War skirmishes in the vicinity left 300 dead. His Silver Spring residence was one of the few in the area that was not torched.¹ U.S. Manuscript Census records for 1860 and 1870

¹ Cavicchi, Clare. "Maryland Inventory of Historic Sites Form M:36/8: Riggs-Thompson House (Academy of Holy Names)," 1998; files on the Riggs-Thompson House (M-36/8) at Montgomery County Maryland-National Capital Parks & Planning Commission Historic Preservation Office;

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 8
Page 3

show that Joseph Bryan was a wealthy master carpenter who was close to 70 when he purchased the Riggs property for \$22,000. He held \$40,000 in real property in 1860 and \$80,000 in 1870. It is not surprising that the Bryans appear to have acquired the property solely as an investment. After one week, the Bryans sold the property to William H. Thompson (d. July 23, 1896) and Helen Nourse Thompson for \$24,000, a 4% profit.

William H. and Helen Nourse Thompson occupancy

William H. Thompson, who was born in Montreal, was a successful businessman whose family became wealthy through their gas-fitting and plumbing business. In 1885, the Thompsons also resided at 1219 Eye Street in the District of Columbia. His brother John W. Thompson was president of the Metropolitan National Bank; William Thompson served as vice president. A Republican, William Thompson was retired when he purchased the Riggs property. His wife, Helen Nourse was the daughter of a Treasury Department division chief. "A lady of charming manners and genial disposition," she received "splendid educational advantages" in Washington. The Thompsons had no children.²

The Thompsons expanded the house around 1866 shortly after they purchased it.³ They added the frame, two-story Italianate portion of the house to the west façade of the Riggs House. Their addition provided more generous space for the front, public rooms of the house. The Thompson's "country house became a social center for other Washingtonians who settled or summered in the Sligo area."⁴ William Thompson added more acreage along Colesville Road, enlarging the property to 160 acres. A 19th century account described the property as

Of choice land...embellished by an elegant residence attractively located in the center of the place, and containing fine forests, beautiful drives and lawns."⁵

Robinson & Associates, Inc. Historic Structures Report, Anderson Cottage, United States Soldiers' and Airman's Home and oral information provided by Judith Helm Robinson, May 2008.

² *Portrait and Biographical Record of the Sixth Congressional District, Maryland*, pp. 768-769; language from wills in research notes for Montgomery County survey form.

³ The 1998 Addendum to the MIHP form provides a date of 1866 based on a doubling of assessment value.

⁴ *Portrait and Biographical Record of the Sixth Congressional District, Maryland*, pp. 768-769.

⁵ Presumably *Portrait and Biographical Record*, p. 768 as cited in Clare Cavicchi, "Maryland Inventory of Historic Sites Form M:36/8: Riggs-Thompson House (Academy of Holy Names)," 1998.

Riggs-Thompson House (M:36/8)
711 Pershing Drive, Silver Spring, MD
Betty Bird, Betty Bird & Associates LLC
July 2008

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 8
Page 4

The drive to Georgia Avenue from the Riggs-Thompson House was still extant at the time of the 1917 U.S.G.S. Survey Map. The branch of Sligo Creek remained above ground at the present location of Ellsworth Drive.

Helen Thompson continued in the house after William Thompson's death in 1896 until she died in May 1923. The property remained in the Thompson family until 1924.⁶

Eldridge and Constance Jordan occupancy and suburban development

By 1924, when the property was sold to Eldridge E. and Constance Jordan, its size had been reduced to 94.73 acres. The following year, real estate broker Jordan and developers Eugene A. Smith and Thomas E. Shaw subdivided the eastern portion of the estate into Jordan & Smith's Addition to Silver Spring Park. The Addition extended roughly from Georgia Avenue to Cedar Street between Bonifant and Pershing Drive, leaving only a ten acre parcel associated with the Riggs-Thompson House.

When the ten acre parcel was sold at auction in 1931, the only buildings on the property other than the Riggs-Thompson House were a small one-story house, a garage, and various outbuildings. By 1933, the smaller property was further subdivided to create the subdivision of Evanswood. Evanswood consisted of the current Riggs-Thompson property as well as the lots sitting on the east sides of Cedar and Springvale. The rear lot line of houses on Cedar Street, in front of the Riggs-Thompson House, was slightly less than 50 yards from the front porch of the house. When the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary acquired the remnant of the original Riggs-Thompson property associated with the house in 1933, only a parcel of land roughly 270 ft. square immediately around the house remained unsubdivided.⁷

The 1963 Sanborn Map shows a 50 ft. right of way named Sylvian Place extending uphill from Ellsworth on the west side of the school. Platted lots on the north side of Sylvian Place came within a few yards of the Auditorium; platted lots on the south side extended further up the hill and backed up to the rear property line on Cedar Street. No houses have been constructed on these lots.

⁶ Notes on Helen Lucretia Thompson's will (HCA 26:927) in research notes for Montgomery County survey form.

⁷ 1931 Klinge Real Estate Atlas, updated to 1941.

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 8
Page 5

Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary and the Academy of the Holy Names

In 1933, the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SHNJM) purchased the house and surrounding two acres for \$10 from the Union Labor Life Insurance to found the Academy of the Holy Names. Founded in French Canada in 1843, the Roman Catholic religious order is dedicated to teaching young girls. The Maryland sisters appear to have been a mission run from the order's New York province. The sisters established a convent and elementary school in the house, adding high school classes in 1936. The present annex was probably added in the 1940s. In the 1950s, the order constructed the Classroom Building and Auditorium/Gymnasium.

The timing of the school's expansion relates to internal developments within the Roman Catholic church as well as the post-war baby boom. In 1948, the Archdiocese of Washington was carved out of the Baltimore Archdiocese, the premier see of North America. In addition to the District of Columbia, the newly formed Archdiocese of Washington included St. Mary's, Charles, Calvert, Prince George's, and Montgomery Counties.

Murphy & Locraft Architects prepared plans to enlarge the school in 1949. A note on a later drawing suggests that the one story hyphens housing internal corridors were probably constructed at a later date, but prior to 1963, the date of the Sanborn Map showing the hyphens in place.⁸ Frederick V. Murphy (1879-1958), who founded the School of Architecture at Catholic University, was a graduate of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, as was his partner, Thomas Hall Locraft (1903-1959), who also served as head of the School of Architecture. Both were active in the Washington Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, each serving a term as president. Murphy specialized in ecclesiastical architecture designing Georgetown Lutheran Church, Sacred Heart Church, and the Apostolic Delegation (now papal legation) in Washington, D.C. His buildings in the vicinity of Catholic University include Graduate Hall, St. Paul's College, Mullen Library, St. Anselm's Abbey, and the School of Music. Locraft designed St. Martin's Church (1940), the Chapel of St. Vincent de Paul (1949); Immaculata Junior College (1952), the Schools of Nursing and Social Service at Catholic University (1950), and the Library of Trinity

⁸ A note on the Collins & Kronstadt Leahy Hogan Collins Draper floor plan showing proposed alterations to the building states, "existing information except connecting corridors to other buildings @ first floor was trace/sketched from original building plans as prepared by Murphy & Locraft Architects dated Sept. 28, 1949."

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 8
Page 6

College (1950).⁹ While both Murphy and Locraft were prominent local architects, their buildings at the Academy of the Holy Names, which have been altered, are not particularly expressive of the large body of work they did for the Roman Catholic church and do not rise to the level of significance that National Register Criterion C requires.

In the late 1980s, after Our Lady of Good Counsel School in Wheaton became coeducational, the Academy of the Holy Names could not maintain their previous enrollment and the school closed shortly thereafter.¹⁰

Chelsea School

Chelsea School, a private school for students with language-related learning disabilities, leased the property from the SHNJM in 1990, purchasing the property after the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission designated it as an historic property in 1998. The School hired Ayres Saint Gross, noted Baltimore-based campus architects, to devise a master plan for the school.¹¹ This master plan called for the rehabilitation of the Riggs-Thompson House for use as administrative offices. New construction would eventually replace the Annex, Classroom Building, and Auditorium/Gymnasium. The Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission and the Montgomery County Planning Board approved these plans in 2001. In 2007, Chelsea School retained Robert Claiborne, a protégé of Daniel Libeskind, to produce a conceptual design for the project and began a capital campaign to fund the work.¹²

Integrity considerations

The Riggs-Thompson House and the immediate setting included within the Montgomery County historic designation retain integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The house remains in its original location with sufficient surrounding grounds to preserve its character as a free-standing house on open space considerably more generous than other neighboring properties on far smaller lots. Its orientation contrasts with

⁹ William Bushong, Judith Helm Robinson, and Julie Mueller, *A Centennial History of the Washington Chapter The American Institute of Architects, 1887-1987*, pp. 69-72, 137, 145.

¹⁰ "Girls school hit as rolls decline," *Montgomery Journal*, 12 February 1988.

¹¹ Ayres Saint Gross is the successor firm to Sill, Buckler and Fenhagen who were associated with the design of Green Hill, the Riggs property in Prince George's County. (MIHP Form P-65-8.)

¹² Agnes Jasinski, "Chelsea School plans \$12M expansion, upgrade," in *Montgomery County Gazette*, pp. A-4 and A-5.

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 8
Page 7

the 20th century street system and reinforces the house's association with country life in a past era.

The Riggs-Thompson House no longer retains its historic landscape and or integrity of setting. The setting for the Riggs-Thompson House has changed considerably since it was constructed. While the drive to the house from Ellsworth Street features mature trees, map evidence shows that the historic approach to the house from Georgia Avenue was roughly aligned with Pershing Avenue along the south side of the property rather than from Ellsworth Street to the north. The remaining 4.3 acres constitute less than 3% of the original 143 acre property. Residential subdivisions surround the property on three sides; large-scale commercial development creeps up from the north. Nevertheless, the immediate site surrounding the house that Montgomery County designated as the Environmental Setting provides sufficient grounds to discern the historic architectural character of the house. (See Attachment B – Approved Environmental Setting.)

While the house incorporates two different construction periods, its design preserves its informal, domestic character. The survival of its prominent porch, its distinct asymmetry, and the juxtaposition of Italianate and French Second Empire architectural features all contribute to its architectural character as a country house – the comfortable secondary residence dedicated to leisure pursuits. The house is clearly not a utilitarian farmhouse nor is it a high style residence designed with an eye to impressing the beholder. The mid-20th century additions do not impair the architectural character of the design of the house. The newer construction is attached to the rear of the house. The hyphen is clearly secondary to the house and separates it from the Annex. The Annex is of similar size, scale, and materials as the Riggs-Thompson House but is attached to the rear of the house. It does not detract from the primary (west) façade or from the north facade. While the Classroom Building and Auditorium/Gymnasium are larger and employ different scale and materials, their siting mitigates their effect on the house. If all of these 20th century structures were removed, the Riggs-Thompson House would return to the appearance it had during its period of historic significance.

Chelsea School's recent rehabilitation of the exterior of the Riggs-Thompson House has restored the materials and workmanship of the original structure. The frame exterior with its wood siding dating from different construction campaigns is now visible. The workmanship that the incised and beaded porch columns, the 19th c. windows, the shutters, and the drop siding represent is still evident. The restoration of the original frame exterior of the Riggs-Thompson House is particularly important to its integrity since the material speaks to the rural character of the house and contrasts with 20th century masonry construction that fire codes for dense

Riggs-Thompson House (M:36/8)
711 Pershing Drive, Silver Spring, MD
Betty Bird, Betty Bird & Associates LLC
July 2008

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 8
Page 8

settlement required. While the Mansart roof no longer retains its slate shingles, its prominent shape speaks to the architectural character of the Riggs cottage.

Even with the small setting included with the Montgomery County designation, the Riggs-Thompson House retains integrity of feeling and association. It remains as an artifact that contrasts with surrounding suburban development, distinguished by its size, scale, design, and materials. Clearly the product of a different era, the house survives to represent the country house phase of settlement in Silver Spring. The observer progresses through the central business district of downtown Silver Spring past early 21st century development spurred by Metro, through modest mid-20th century suburban development, and travels on Ellsworth Drive to a large 21st century mall complete with Whole Foods Market to find not one mile away, a house that transports the observer to an earlier time and place.

Riggs-Thompson House (M:36/8)
711 Pershing Drive, Silver Spring, MD
Betty Bird, Betty Bird & Associates LLC
July 2008

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 9
Page 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY¹

Published Sources:

Bushong, William, Judith Helm Robinson, and Julie Mueller. *A Centennial History of the Washington Chapter the American Institute of Architects, 1887-1987*. Washington, D.C.: The Washington Architectural Foundation Press, 1987.

Portrait and Biographical Record of the Sixth Congressional District, Maryland. New York: Chapman Publishing Co., 1898.

Spalding, Thomas W. *The Premier See: A History of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, 1789-1994*.

Maps & Drawings:

Architectural plans and evacuation maps, Chelsea School.

Klinge Real Estate Atlas, 1931, updated to 1941.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1933, updated to 1963.

Newspapers & Periodicals

"Girls school hit as rolls decline," *Montgomery Journal*, 12 February 1988.

Jasinski, Agnes "Chelsea School plans \$12M expansion, upgrade," in *Montgomery County Gazette*, pp. A-4 and A-5.

Obituary, George W. Riggs, *Evening Star*, August 24, 1881.

Unpublished Sources:

¹ The Riggs-Thompson House has been extensively researched and documented, most recently by Clare Cavicchi. For the most part, this bibliography omits sources cited in the bibliography of earlier Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties forms for the Riggs-Thompson House.

Riggs-Thompson House (M:36/8)
711 Pershing Drive, Silver Spring, MD
Betty Bird, Betty Bird & Associates LLC
July 2008

ADDENDUM
Continuation Sheet – Section 9
Page 2

Berger, Howard. "Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form for Green Hill (PG: 65/8)," 1990.
Board of Appeals for Montgomery County, Opinion of the Board, Case No. 2-2405, October 5,
2005.

Campus Management E&G Group. Maryland Historical Trust Heritage Preservation
Certification Application for the Chelsea School, August 2002.

Cavicchi, Clare. "Maryland Inventory of Historic Sites Form M:36/8: Riggs-Thompson House
(Academy of Holy Names)," 1998.

Crawford, Catherine. "Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, 36/8: William H. Thompson
House/Holy Names Convent-Academy," 1983.

Dwyer, Michael. "Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form, 36-8: William H. Thompson
House/Holy Names Convent-Academy," 1975.

Files on the Riggs-Thompson House (M-36/8) at Montgomery County Maryland-National
Capital Parks & Planning Commission Historic Preservation Office. A copy of the early
20th century photograph of the house (from a private collection) may be found in these
files.

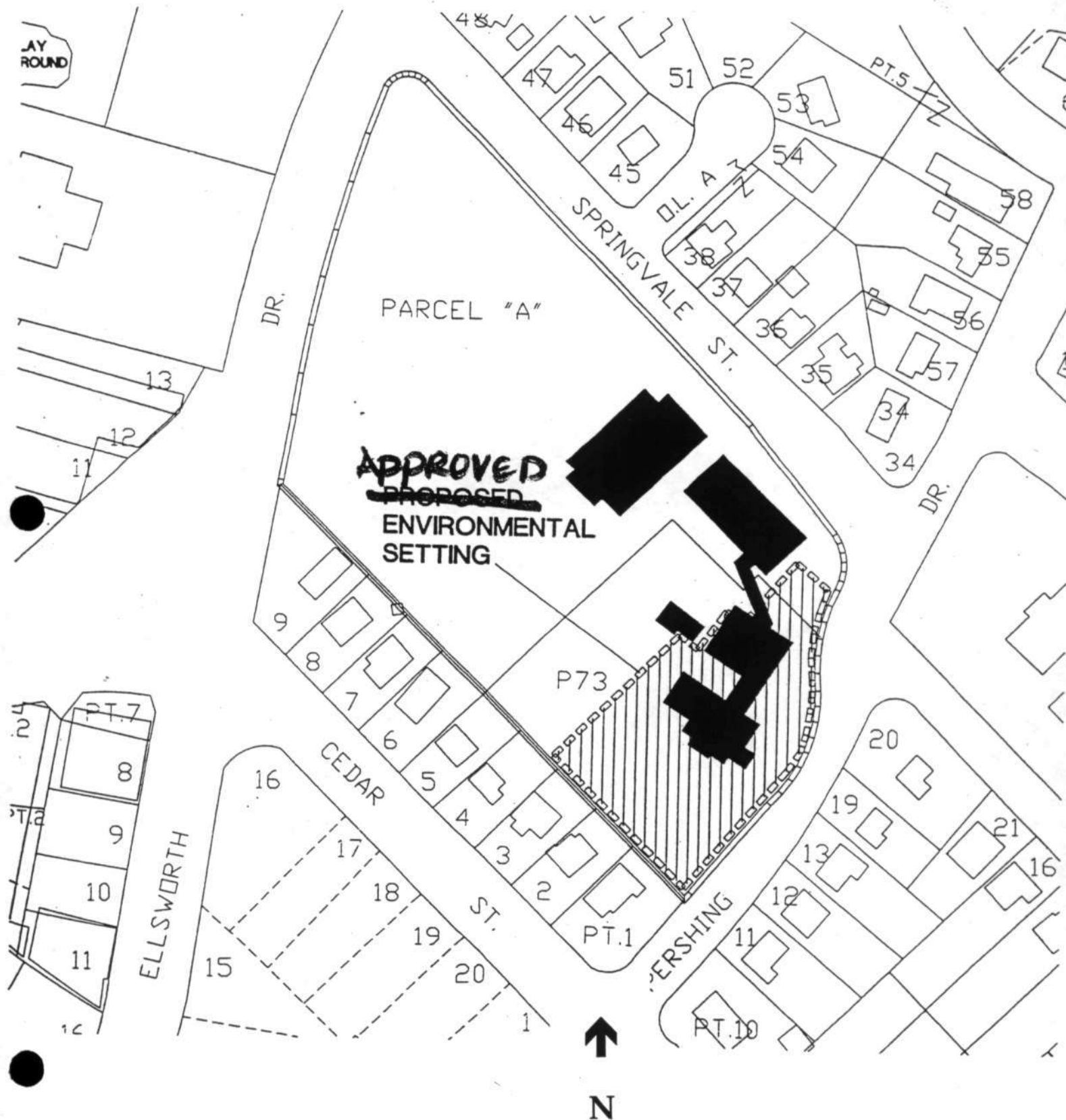
Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, Historic Area Work Permit #245824 for
the Riggs-Thompson House, May 24, 2001.

Robinson & Associates, Inc. Historic Structures Report, Anderson Cottage, United States
Soldiers' and Airman's Home, 1985. (courtesy of Robinson & Associates, Inc.)

Attachment B

M:36-8

Approved Environmental Setting
Montgomery County National Capital
Parks & Planning Commission Files



WASHINGTON WEST QUADRANGLE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA-MARYLAND-VIRGINIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES
(TOPOGRAPHIC-BATHYMETRIC)

Riggs-Thompson House (M:36/8)
711 Pershing Drive
Silver Spring, Montgomery County

ELLICOTT CITY 23 MI
FOUR CORNERS 1.6 MI

OLNEY 11 MI
ATON 3. MI

FOREST GLEN 2.4 MI

800 000 FEET (MD.)

77° 00'

3



N

0.2 MI. TO MD. 193

420 000 FEET
(MD.)

GREEN MEADOWS 1.3 MI.

WHITE OAK 5 MI.

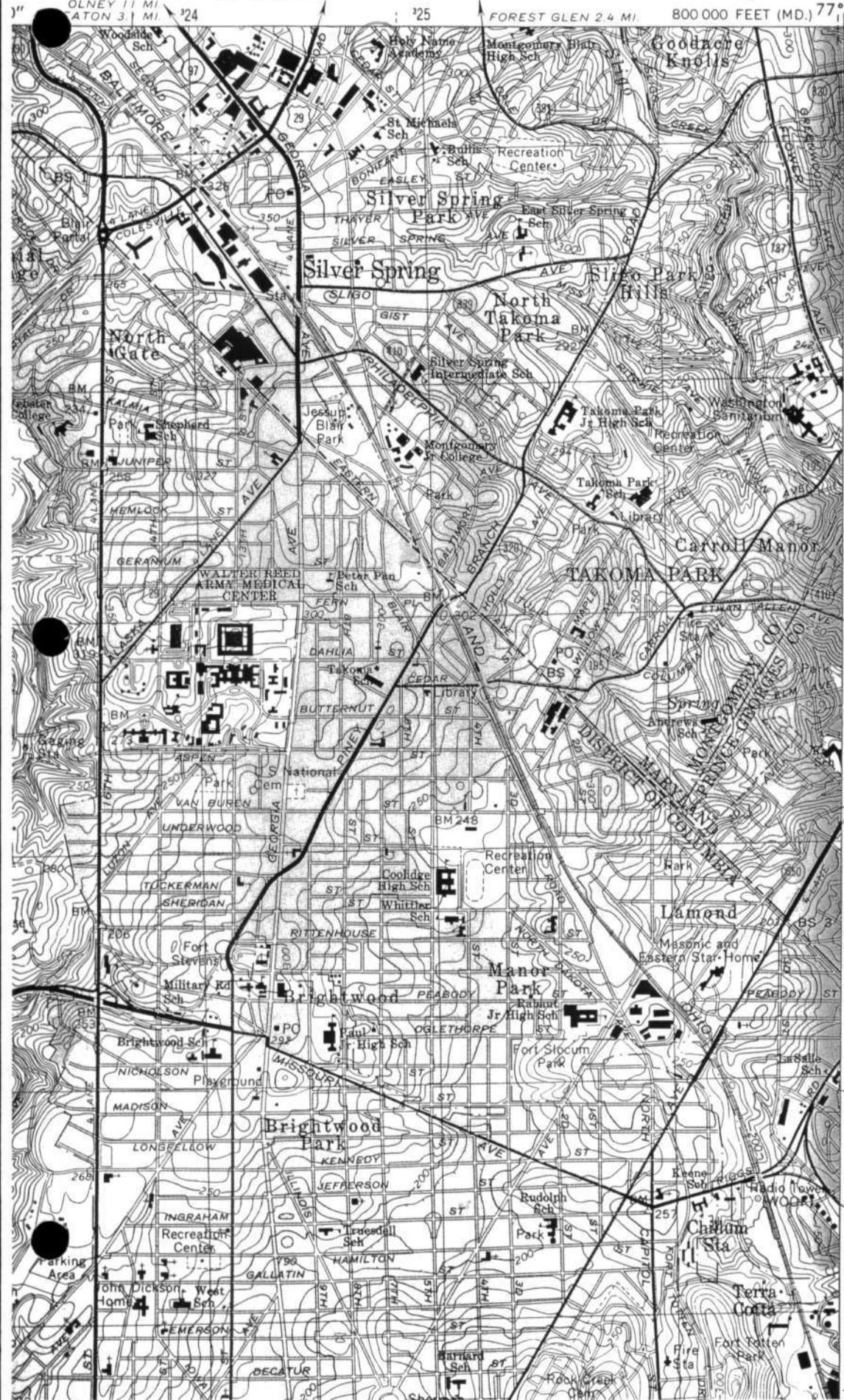
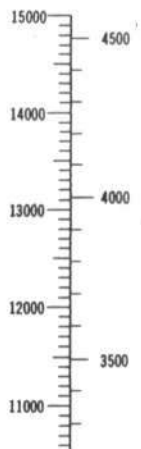
41° 14'

57° 30"

3.5 MI. TO U.S. 50

CONVERSION
SCALES

Feet Meters







M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

VIEW FROM NW SHOWING WEST FACADE OF ANNEX; NORTH & WEST FACADES
OF RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

2 OF 33

000001; 000001-R1-0000

05/30/08



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR. SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

VIEW FROM SW SHOWING SOUTH FACADE OF RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

3 OF 33

Bettybird Bettybird-RI-2008

35-30-08



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

VIEW FROM NE SHOWING NORTH & EAST FACADES OF RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

4 OF 33

DECD01; DECD01-RI-E029

.. 25/33/26



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE & ANNEX FROM SE SHOWING EAST FACADE OF RIGGS-
THOMPSON HOUSE, SOUTH FACADE OF ANNEX

5 OF 33

Bettybird, Bettybird-R1-0017

05/30/08





M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE WEST FACADE - VIEW FROM N SHOWING
DENTILS, WOOD SIDING

7 OF 33

000001, 000001-R1-0023

05/30/08



M=36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

ECITY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE: SOUTH WALL OF PROJECTING REAR PORTION
OF HOUSE, VIEW FROM SOUTH

8 OF 33



M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE: DETAIL OF WEST PORCH COLUMN SHOWING
CORNER BEAD & INCISED CAPITAL; DROP SIDING IN BACKGROUND

1 OF 33

PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTY BIRD



M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

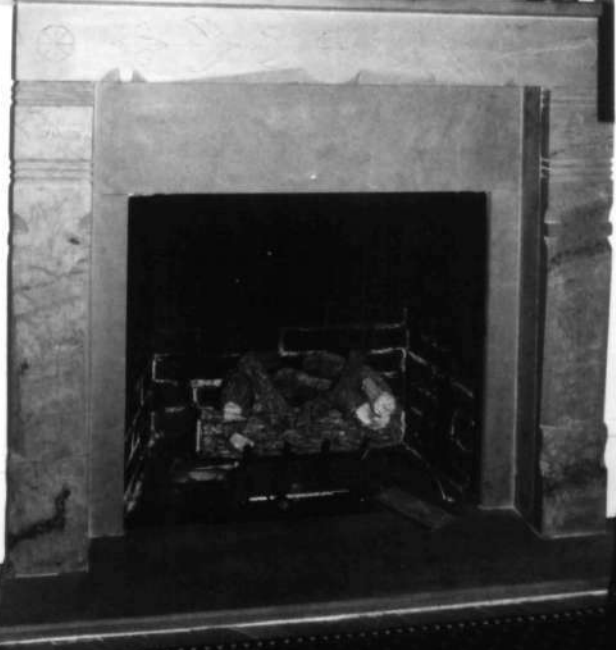
MD SHPO

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE: CENTRAL HALL FROM N. SHOWING STAIR

10 OF 33

Betty01, Betty01-RI-E007

05/30/08



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD.

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE: CORNER MANTEL IN NW FRONT PARLOR

11 OF 33

000000 0000 0 00000 000000 00 000



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

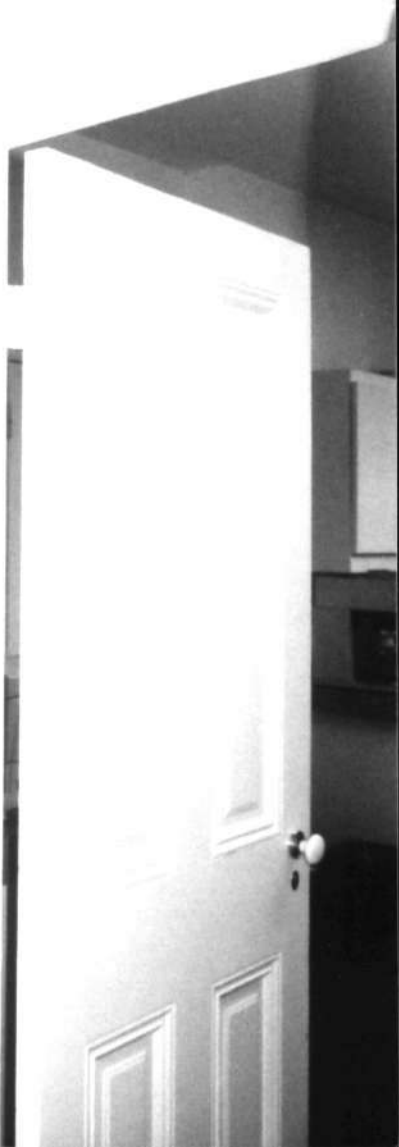
BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE; MARBLE MANTEL-1ST FLOOR, RIGGS HOUSE

12 OF 33



M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE: DOOR & MOLDING ON EASTERWALL OF
ORIGINAL HOUSE OPENING ONTO 1ST FLOOR ADDITION PROJECTING
FROM SOUTH FACADE

13 OF 33

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BETTY BIRD FOR THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



M= 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR, SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

3D ORTHOGRAPHIC VIEW - 2 0004 744546

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE: DETAIL OF WINDOW & MOLDING,
EAST FACADE OVERLOOKING RECESSED SE CORNER OF
T-SHAPED PLAN

14 OF 33

002

53



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

ANNEX BLDG: SOUTH FACADE SHOWING SCREEN PORCH & RELATIONSHIP TO
RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE (LEFT)

15 OF 33

BETTS01: BETTS01-R1-E024

05/30/08



M:3613

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

ANNEX BLDG: VIEW FROM NE SHOWING NORTH FACADE, RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE
ON RIGHT

16 OF 33

Bettybird Bettybird-R1-E032

05/30/08



ALL VISITORS MUST
REPORT TO THE
MAIN OFFICE

M=36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

ANNEX FROM SE SHOWING EAST FACADE & RELATIONSHIP TO HOUSE

17 OF 33

000001, 000001-RI-0019

05/30/08



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE
711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING
MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

ANNEX BLDG: EAST FACADE FROM NE (STEPS OF CLASSROOM BLDG.) SHOWING
HYPHEN CONNECTING ANNEX WITH CLASSROOM BLDG

18 OF 33

DET001: DET001-R1-0021

05/30/08



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

ANNEX BLDG: WEST FACADE & HYPHEN CONNECTING ANNEX WITH
RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE, VIEW FROM NW

19 OF 33

Betty01: Betty01-R1-E022

05/30/08



M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE
711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING
MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

00/00/00

MD SHPO

ANNEX BLDG: INTERIOR - CORRIDOR ON N SIDE OF 1ST FLOOR OF
HYPHEN BETWEEN ANNEX & RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE -
VIEW TO WEST

20 OF 33

0000-12-1001100 1001100



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

ANNEX BLDG: STAIR AT EAST END OF BLDG

21 OF 33

80/02/00

4000-12-1001100 1001100



M=36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

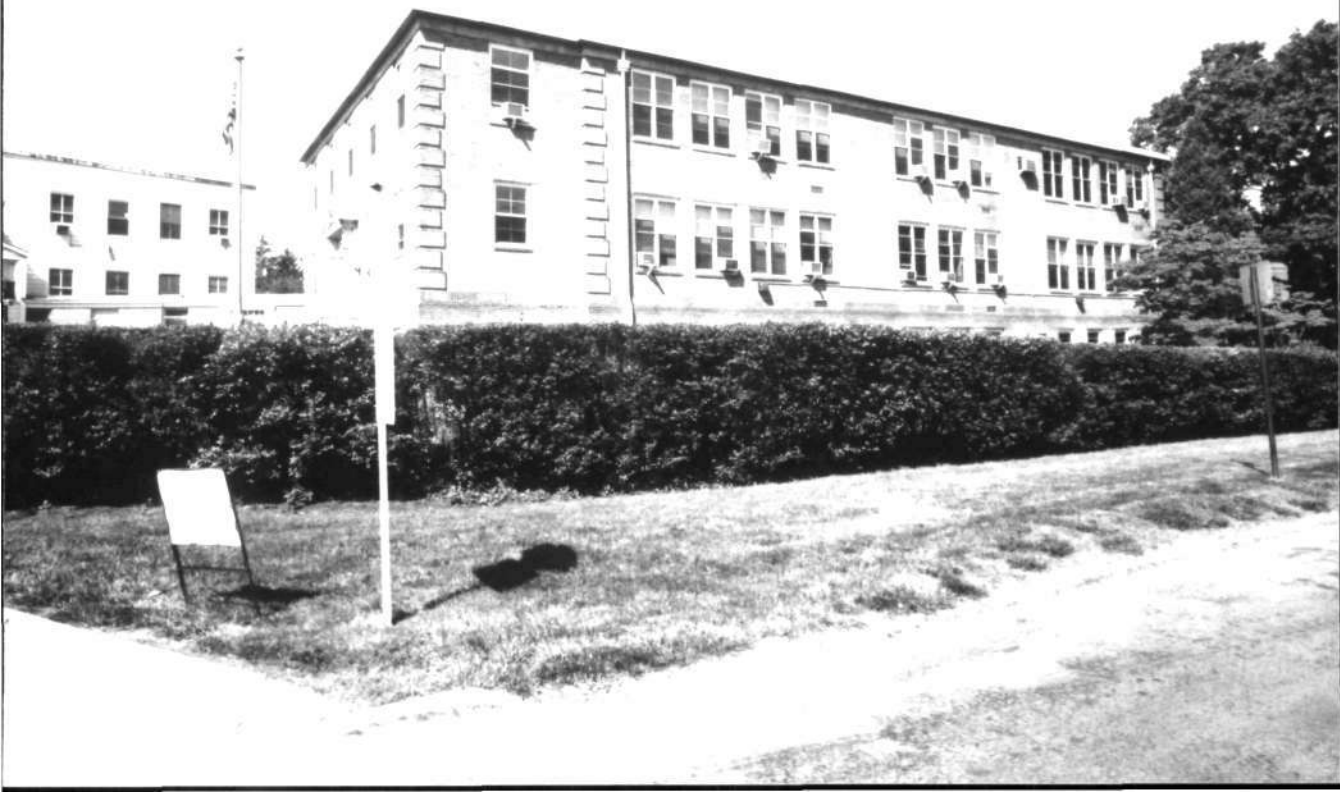
MD SHPO

ANNEX BLDG: 2ND FLOOR HALL LOOKING EAST TO STAIR

22 OF 33

Betty01, Betty01-R1-0002

05/30/08



M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

CLASSROOM BLDG: VIEW FROM SE SHOWING SOUTH & EAST FACADES

23 OF 33

024

V3



M=36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING
MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008
MD SHPO

025 OF 025 OF CLASSROOM BLDG - 1 0044 724545
CLASSROOM BLDG: VIEW FROM SE SHOWING SOUTHEAST FACADES,
BRICK QUOINS, WATERTABLE, SOLDIER COURSE

24 OF 33

025

74



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

CLASSROOM BLDG: VIEW FROM SW SHOWING FRONT (S) FACADE &
HYPHEN BETWEEN ANNEX & CLASSROOM BLDG.

Bettybird, Bettybird-R1-0020

25 OF 33

05/30/08



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

CLASSROOM BLDG: WEST FACADE & REAR OF HYPHEN
BETWEEN CLASSROOM BLDG. & ANNEX BLDG FROM NW

060501, 060501-01-0000

26 OF 33

05/30/08



M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO 814 BR. 20080501 1000 1. Betty Bird

CLASSROOM BLDG: INTERIOR CORRIDOR

27 OF 33



M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO 815 68 000000 0000 2 0000 700000

AUDITORIUM/GYMNASIUM; PRIMARY (EAST) FACADE - VIEW
FROM NE

28 OF 33



M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

AUDITORIUM/GYMNASIUM: VIEW FROM SE SHOWING

ARCADED ENTRANCE & HYPHEN TO CLASSROOM BLDG.

29 OF 33

022

71



M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

Bettsol: Bettsol-R1-2026

AUDITORIUM/GYMNASIUM: WEST & SOUTH FACADES FROM SW;
VIEW OF PROJECTING BAY HOUSING STAGE, REAR EXIT,
1-STORY LOCKER ROOM, & REAR WALL OF HYPHEN TO
CLASSROOM BLDG

Bettsol: Bettsol-R1-2026

30 OF 33



M:36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO

Settson, Bettson-R1-2027

ADDITORIUM/GYMNASIUM: NORTH FACADE FROM NE

31 OF 33

05/30/08



M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING
MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008₇₉

MD SHPO

AUDITORIUM/GYMNASIUM: REAR EXIT ON WEST FACADE

32 OF 33

STP



M: 36/8

RIGGS-THOMPSON HOUSE

711 PERSHING DR., SILVER SPRING

MONTGOMERY CO., MD

BETTY BIRD

MAY 2008

MD SHPO 20

AUDITORIUM/GYMNASIUM: FRONT OF HYPHEN BETWEEN CLASSROOM

BLDG & AUDITORIUM/GYMNASIUM VIEW FROM EAST

33 OF 33

SHPO 2008 1 10000 000000 00 000

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. M:36/8

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic Riggs-Thompson House

and/or common Academy of Holy Names

2. Location

street & number 711 Pershing Drive _____ not for publication

city, town Silver Spring _____ vicinity of

state Maryland county Montgomery

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district)	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
		<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Sisters of Holy Names of Jesus & Mary of N.Y. Province, Inc.

street & number 711 Pershing Drive telephone no:

city, town Silver Spring state and zip code Maryland 20815

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse Tax Map and Parcel JN33; Parcels P73 and N18

city, town Rockville state Maryland Liber and Folio 00560/0445

6. Primary Location of Additional Data

☐ Individually Listed in the National Register
☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ HSR or Research report at MHT
☐ other:

Description

Survey No. M:36/8

Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

Resource Count:

See attached.

CONTINUATION SHEET
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive

Section 7:2

The Riggs-Thompson House is located on a 4.8 acre property in a residential subdivision immediately outside the Central Business District of Silver Spring. The parcel is bounded by Pershing Drive and Ellsworth Drive on the south and north, and Springvale Road on the east. Lining the western boundary are houses and lots facing Cedar Street. The Riggs-Thompson House, facing west with its south side along Pershing Drive, was built to face Georgia Avenue now two blocks away.¹

In front of the main (south) facade lie vestiges of a garden which probably dates from the 1930s, after the property was acquired by the current owners. At the heart of the garden are two tall cedar trees surrounded by dogwoods and underlaid by perennials. A central planting area features a large religious statue, dogwoods and beds of iris, roses and other perennials. On the west side of the house a broad lawn is dotted with 3 immense tulip poplar trees as well as numerous oaks and a few very tall black walnuts. A brick garage on this side of the house is accessed by a steep drive, with land dropping steeply down to Ellsworth Drive which followed Sligo Creek Branch, a stream bed now located underground.

The house, composed of Second Empire and Italianate style sections and later additions, was originally built c1858 by George Washington Riggs, and expanded by William Thompson after the Civil War. The structure was adapted in the 20th century for use as a private school and convent. The original section is a central brick mansard-roofed house. An Italianate front was added to the west (front) elevation with a small south side wing. The entire building is covered in aluminum siding.²

The original central block, constructed of brick, has a T-shaped plan consisting of a front rectangular block facing west and a rear ell. This block is sheltered by an asphalt shingled mansard roof, with straight silhouette, punctuated by arched dormer windows on front and rear elevations. External chimneys are located on both south and north sides. According to historic Sanborn maps, this central block is constructed of brick; however, like the remainder of the historic house, it is now covered with aluminum siding.

¹Compass coordinates have been modified for ease of description. Streets actually run from southwest to northeast, and northwest to southeast. The Sligo Creek branch, site of today's Ellsworth Drive, may be seen on the 1917 USGS map.

²Covered with aluminum siding, the brick construction is not evident today. It is shown on the 1933 Sanborn Insurance Map.

CONTINUATION SHEET
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive

Section 7:3

A one-story north wing projecting from the main (brick) block appears to be an original chapel built by the Riggs family. The cornice on east and west elevations is punctuated by shallow pediments.

West of the main block is a five bay by two bay Italianate style section with flat roof. This section was probably built by the Thompson family. A historic photograph reveals that this section had a cornice with modillions similar to those formerly found on the chapel wing. Windows are two over two double-hung sash, with louvered shutters. An exterior chimney is located between the fourth and fifth bays. A double door entrance with transom is located in the central bay. A full width veranda has a double depth in the central three bays, with chamfered posts and railing. The porch entrance with stairs and railing are on the south side. One story wings with triple hung sash are located on the north and south sides.

Between 1941 and 1963 a two-story frame block was added to the rear of the original brick section. In 1950, a two-story brick building was constructed facing Springvale Road, northeast of the historic house, connected to the rear frame section with a one-story brick enclosed walkway. By 1975, the house was encased in aluminum siding and cornice brackets were removed. Sometime after 1975, the original slate fishscale shingle roof on the historic house was replaced with asphalt shingle.³

³1941 Klingé Real Estate Atlas. 1933 Sanborn Insurance Atlas, corrected to 1963. Photograph of 6-2-1975 by Michael Dwyer, M-NCPPC, MHT inventory form. Cornice brackets are seen in an early 20th century view of the house's west (front) facade (private collection, M-NCPPC files).

8. Significance

Survey No. M:36/8

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/humanitarian	
	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater	
	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention			

Specific dates	c1858; c1866	Builder/Architect	
check: Applicable Criteria:	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D		
and/or Applicable Exceptions:	<input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D <input type="checkbox"/> E <input type="checkbox"/> F		
Level of Significance:	<input type="checkbox"/> national <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> local		

HISTORICAL CONTEXT:

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization: Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s): Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s): Architecture and Community Planning

Resource Type: Individual

Category: Residential

Historic Environment: Suburban

Historic Function(s) and Use(s): Residential

Known Design Source:

CONTINUATION SHEET
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive

Section 8:2

The Riggs-Thompson House is historically significant as the residence of George Washington Riggs (1813-1881), a founder of what became Riggs National Bank and one of Washington's wealthiest and most influential citizens. It is additionally significant for its association with subsequent owner William H. Thompson, a locally prominent businessman and social leader. Though the integrity of its setting and building material has been compromised, the resource is architecturally significant as a rare example of a Silver Spring country estate built before the early 20th century suburbanization of this area. The residence, built c1858 on a 140-acre estate, represents a period of prosperity when upper class Washington residents established country seats in lower Montgomery County.

In January 1857, George W. Riggs purchased 140 acres of land along Westminster Road (Georgia Avenue), and a smaller adjacent four-acre parcel on Colesville Road. The following year he acquired another three-acre parcel on Colesville Road. All three parcels were part of a tract known as *Girl's Portion*. It appears likely that the original section of the house was the central brick portion. Though encased in later additions, this residence includes the earliest example of the Second Empire style in Montgomery County.⁴

George W. Riggs (1813-1881) was a founder of Riggs National Bank. He was born in Georgetown and attended Yale University from 1829-1831. His father, Elisha Riggs, was of a well-known Montgomery County family who became an influential New York City broker. George W. Riggs formed a Washington brokerage and banking firm in 1840 with William W. Corcoran, known as Corcoran and Riggs. That same year, Riggs married Janet Madeline Cecelia Shedden (1815-1871). In 1844, under the Tyler administration, the firm became an official depository of the U.S. Treasury.⁵

Besides being known as a wealthy and successful banker, George W. Riggs was a prominent Washington citizen. He was one of the governors of the Metropolitan Club in 1865,

⁴Deeds JGH 5:566 (1857) and JGH 7:199 (1858). The construction date estimation is based on study of tax records (Catherine Crawford, MHT Inventory Form, 1983) and date of purchase. The Sycamores, Manchester Mill Road, was built c1867; Marywood, in Brookeville, dates from c 1868; and the Wilbur House, Silver Spring, was built in c1887.

⁵"Riggs Bank" in Proctor, *Washington Past and Present*, p298. Partners in Progress: Riggs National Bank in Kathryn Schneider Smith (ed) *Washington at Home*, p309. *The Riggs Family of Maryland*, pp328-331. Obituary, *Washington Star*, August 1881. The 1850 census lists the Riggs family residing in Washington. Source: Robinson & Associates, Anderson Cottage Historic Structure Report, 1985.

CONTINUATION SHEET
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive

Section 8:3

an organizer of the Washington and Georgetown Railroad Company, a member of the Board of Aldermen of the District of Columbia (1873) and a trustee of the Corcoran Gallery of Art. He temporarily retired from the firm in 1848, allowing his younger brother Elisha Jr to represent the family's interests in the firm. George W. Riggs moved to New York by 1853 where he was occupied in the settlement of his father's estate. When William Corcoran retired in 1854, he returned to head the newly renamed Riggs & Company.⁶

About 1858, George W. Riggs built the house on Georgia Avenue (now accessed from Pershing Drive) as a country estate. The property was assessed with \$800 worth of improvements in 1858. The Montgomery County estate was a lively place when the Riggs family was in residence. George and Janet Riggs had between seven and nine children born between 1841 and 1858, with a total of six who lived to adulthood. The estate included a working farm recognized for its fine-blooded cattle.⁷

The Riggs family may have been responsible for constructing the north chapel wing, located directly off of the central mansard-roofed block. Janet was an ardent Catholic; George converted to the faith after his marriage. The Riggs' are known to have built a chapel at their Green Hill estate in Prince George's County.⁸

Before moving to Montgomery County, George and Janet Riggs had resided at Corn Rigs, a 256-acre Washington, D.C. estate with a brick Gothic Revival house they built in 1842. This structure, later known as the Anderson Cottage and used as a summer White House, is still extant, now part of the U.S. Soldier's and Airmen's Home. In 1856, shortly before purchasing the Sligo property, Riggs had built a house on I Street, in Washington, D.C. Baltimore architect

⁶The Riggs Family of Washington, p331-332.

⁷Montgomery County Tax Assessments, Volume 1858-1863. Howard Berger, "Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory Form: Green Hill." M-NCPPC, 1990. 8-11-1864 letter of Elizabeth Lee in V. J. Laas (Ed.), *Wartime Washington: Civil War Letters of Elizabeth Blair Lee*. Reference has been made to a ball attended by Abraham Lincoln which though unsubstantiated is certainly possible given George Riggs' prominence. *Montgomery Journal*, 2-12-1988.

⁸Berger, Green Hill Inventory Form, 1990. During the period in which the Riggs family lived at the Sligo house, neighbor Elizabeth Blair Lee, described an April 1862 meeting with 20-year-old Kate Riggs who informed her of the death of a mutual friend from typhoid. Elizabeth wrote of her plans to attend "the funeral at the Cottage Chapel". Kate, or Catherine Shedden Riggs, was the oldest daughter of the Riggs family. *Letters of Elizabeth Blair Lee*, 4-29-1862 (p136).

CONTINUATION SHEET
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive

Section 8:4

R. Snowden Andrews designed the elegant three-story brick house in the Italian Renaissance style. The I Street house was demolished in 1935.⁹

The Sligo area became known for its summer vacation houses, built for wealthy Washingtonians eager to escape the crowded and unhealthy urban condition. By 1854, just a few years before the Riggs family established their estate, Francis Preston Blair, influential editor of *The Globe* newspaper who was retiring from the publishing business, had settled at his country estate known as Silver Spring. This became the namesake for the community that later developed in the area.¹⁰

Descriptions of George Riggs' property are found in the Civil War correspondence of Elizabeth Blair Lee, daughter of Francis Preston Blair. From her letters one learns that Riggs had moved from his Sligo estate by November 1863. The following July, Silver Spring area skirmishes between Confederate and Union soldiers resulted in 300 dead. Private homes were torched and plundered. Elizabeth wrote that the Riggs were among the lucky few who "have had only their hay forage eaten & the eatables grown by the families" adding that Riggs also lost a valuable ox.¹¹

One week after this misfortune, the family sold their Silver Spring farm. The property was nonetheless considered desirable, selling for the respectable sum of \$22,000 for 147 acres to Joseph and Octavia Bryan, on July 21, 1864. The Bryans sold the land within a week to William Thompson for \$23,000.¹²

Upon his death in 1881 an obituary read: "Mr. Riggs was remarkable for strength of mind and for his power to grasp and fathom any subject presented to him. Mild and retiring in disposition, yet his hand was ever open to the calls of worthy necessity, and in all his transactions his judgement was prompt, and his conclusions just."¹³

⁹*The Riggs Family of Washington*, p330. Robinson & Associates, "Historic Structures Report: Anderson Cottage," 1985. Illustration of I Street House from files of M-NCPPC, Prince George's County.

¹⁰Roger Brooke Farquhar. Joyce Nalewajk, *History of Woodside*, pp 41-42.

¹¹Map of Defenses of Washington, Atlas to Accompany Official Records of Union and Confederate Armies, 1861-1865. B. F. Cooling, *Jubal Early's Raid on Washington: 1864*, 150-153. V. J. Laas (Ed.), *Wartime Washington: Civil War Letters of Elizabeth Blair Lee*, p421.

¹²Deeds EBP 1:281(7-21-1864); EBP 1:284 (7-27-1864); EBP 10:121 (8-30-1872). Howard Berger, "Maryland Historical Trust Historic Sites Inventory Form: Green Hill." M-NCPPC, 1990.

¹³"Death of George W. Riggs," *Washington Star*, August 1881.

CONTINUATION SHEET
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive

Section 8:5

William Thompson, a prominent Washington businessman who was retiring from a successful plumbing and gas-fitting business, moved to the house after the Civil War. He was vice-president of the Metropolitan National Bank and had additional financial interests in steamboats and real estate. Thompson was "a man of progressive disposition, great energy and upright character." At the onset of the Civil War, he had married Helen L. Nourse, who was described as "a lady of charming manners and genial disposition [who] received splendid educational advantages in Washington." In 1872, Thompson acquired an additional 3 3/4 acre tract on Colesville Road, thus enlarging the farm to 160 acres.¹⁴

Soon after purchasing the property, the Thompsons enlarged the house, adding an Italianate style front to the south/southwest side. The addition was probably built by 1866, when the assessed value of improvements was \$1,500, nearly double the previous assessment.¹⁵

After the Metropolitan Branch of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad opened in 1873, suburban development grew in the Sligo area. The train stop was given the name Silver Spring Station, in honor of Blair estate. The community at the Colesville Road-Georgia Avenue intersection, however, continued to be known as Sligo into the early 20th century.¹⁶

The Riggs-Thompson estate became a social center for other Washingtonians who settled or summered in the area. The Thompsons, who were childless, entertained frequently, hosting gatherings sponsored by the Home Interest Club and other organizations founded by new suburbanites. A contemporary account described the Thompson property as being "of choice land...embellished by an elegant residence attractively located in the center of the place, and containing fine forests, beautiful drives and lawns." The Thompsons continued to maintain a house in Washington, living at 1219 I Street NW.¹⁷ In 1889, the *Evening Star* reported that the "beautiful rolling country of the Silver Spring area" was characterized by "attractive residences of people who have established charming country homes with spacious surroundings of lawn, park, forest, and farm." The Riggs-Thompson estate is representative of Sligo area country estates that set the standard for residential living from the mid 19th to the early 20th century.

¹⁴*Portrait and Biographical Record*, 1898, p768-9. List of Patrons, in *Hopkins Atlas*, 1879.

¹⁵ Montgomery County tax assessment records.

¹⁶1917 USGS map includes communities of Sligo, at Colesville Road, and Silver Spring, at train station, Sligo Avenue.

¹⁷*Portrait and Biographical Record*, p768. Joyce Nalewajk, *Woodside: The Early Years*, citing obituary in *Montgomery Press*, July 31, 1896 (p41) and 1889 *Evening Star* article (p42). Washington address included in Thompson's will dated February 2, 1885.

CONTINUATION SHEET
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive

Section 8:6

William Thompson died in 1896. A notice in the *Sentinel* observed that Thompson passed away while "at his farm in Silver Springs (sic)". Helen Thompson continued to maintain the estate into the early 20th century. In addition to furniture and furnishings, the house was outfitted with "books, pictures, paintings, [and] ornaments". Helen owned several automobiles, driven by chauffeur David Hawkins, and to manage the estate she employed a farm overseer, John W. Shaw. Helen died May 13, 1923, leaving her possessions to her sister, Sarah Lord Pratt, and sister in law Julia Moore Nourse.¹⁸

In 1924, the property, reduced to 94.73 acres, was sold to real estate broker Eldridge E. Jordan and his wife Constance. This sale marked the decline of the estate, located in a rapidly developing residential area just outside the burgeoning Silver Spring business district. Some years earlier, the 110-acre William Thayer estate, located immediately south of Riggs-Thompson, was subdivided and named Silver Spring Park (between Sligo Avenue and Bonifant Street). In 1925, the eastern portion of the Riggs-Thompson estate was subdivided when Eldridge Jordan joined developers Eugene A. Smith and Thomas E. Shaw to create Jordan & Smith's Addition to Silver Spring Park, located between Bonifant Street and Pershing Drive (then Baltimore Road) and extending from Georgia Avenue to Cedar Street.¹⁹

This subdivision left the Riggs-Thompson House on a ten-acre parcel. In 1926, the Jordans and Eugene Smith took a \$35,000 mortgage on this property. By 1931, they defaulted on this loan and the property was offered at public sale. The house was described as a frame dwelling with 15 or more rooms, four baths, and "all the modern improvements" including electricity. Other buildings on the ten-acre parcel were a small, single story dwelling, a garage, and various other outbuildings. Ruth Money bought the property for \$30,000 and immediately conveyed it to Evan Reid Corporation.²⁰

¹⁸William died July 23, 1896. *Sentinel* obituary July 31, 1896. His will is recorded in GCD 2:365. Helen will: HCA 26:427. The furnishings of the house and other personal property were assessed at \$1300 in 1866, 1868 and 1918.

¹⁹Deed 354:29. Subject to driveway Right of Way, described in Plat, Orphans Court HCA 27:216. 1894 Hopkins estate shows Thayer estate while 1907 Chandler map records subdivision between Bonifant Avenue and Sligo Avenue. Jordan & Smith's Addition, platted June 1, 1925 (4:301).

²⁰Deed of Trust 397:365 (1926). Deeds 532:108, 532:109 (1931). Klingé Real Estate Atlas, 1931, M-NCPPC copy updated. Description of house from Equity Case #6115, 48:468 cited in Catherine Crawford's MHT form, 1983. Jordan was president of Investors Securities Corporation which sold land to create the Montgomery Country Club, by 1933, for which a frame building was built at the southeast corner of Pershing Drive and Springvale Road, now used by the Chelsea School.

CONTINUATION SHEET
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive

Section 8:7

The property was further subdivided in a community known as Evanswood. Houses were built along Cedar Street, in the front yard of the Riggs Thompson House. Other houses were planned for lots on the rest of the block, leaving the historic house on a 1.4-acre parcel fronting on Pershing Drive (Maple Lane). In 1933, the Sisters of Holy Names of Jesus & Mary, Inc. purchased the house and remaining undeveloped lots along Ellsworth Drive (Baltimore Road), Pershing Drive and Springvale (Hawley) Road.²¹

The Holy Names Academy opened in the Riggs-Thompson House as an elementary school. High school classes were added in 1936. In 1950, a two-story brick building was constructed facing Springvale Road, northeast of the historic house. Classes were moved out of the house, which has been used in more recent years as a convent and school annex.²²

²¹Deed 560:445 (1933). 1931 Klingé Real Estate Atlas.

²²"Girl's School Hit as Rolls Decline," *Montgomery Journal*, 2-12-1988. Construction date of brick school from Sanborn Insurance Map, 1933, corrected to 1963.

Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. M:36/8

See attached

0. Geographical Data

acreage of nominated property 4.8 acres

quadrangle name

Quadrangle scale

verbal boundary description and justification

list all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

1. Form Prepared By

name/title	Clare Lise Cavicchi, Historic Preservation Planner		
organization	Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission	date	5/98
street & number	8787 Georgia Avenue	telephone	301-563-3400
city or town	Silver Spring	state	Maryland 20910-3760

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

CONTINUATION SHEET
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive

Section 9:2

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Boyd, T. H. S. *The History of Montgomery County, Maryland*. Baltimore, Md: Regional Publishing Co, 1968. Originally published 1879, Clarksburg, Maryland.

Chapman Publishing Company, *Portrait and Biographical Record*, Sixth Congressional District, Maryland, 1898.

Equity Records, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville, Maryland.

Hewitt, Jack. National Photo Company Photographs. Private Collection.

Land Records, Montgomery County Courthouse, Rockville, Maryland. Deeds and Plats.

Maps:

Map of Defenses of Washington, *Atlas to Accompany Official Records of Union and Confederate Armies*, 1861-1865.

Chandler, George V. Lower Montgomery County. Linden, Md: 4-16-1907.

Deets and Maddox, *Real Estate Atlas*, 1917.

Hopkins, G. M. *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, Including Montgomery County, Maryland*. 1879.

Hopkins, G. M. *Northern Virginia and Bethesda*, 1894.

Klinge *Real Estate Atlas*, 1931 and 1941.

Martenet and Bond, *Map of Montgomery County, Maryland*, 1865.

Maryland Geological Survey Map, Bethesda & Vicinity, 1910.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1927-1959.

Prominent Personages of the Nation's Capital. Washington, D.C.: The Washington Times Co, 1924.

Washington Star, George Washington Riggs, Obituary, August 1881.

Who's Who in the Nation's Capital. Washington: W. W. Publishing Company. 1923-24.

CONTINUATION SHEET
36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive

Section 9:3

Secondary Sources:

Berger, Howard S. "Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form: Resource #65-8: Green Hill, 2009 Van Buren Street, West Hyattsville, Maryland," M-NCPPC Prince George's County, 1990.

Cooling, Benjamin Franklin. *Jubal Early's Raid on Washington, 1864*. Baltimore: Nautical & Aviation Publishing Co, 1989.

Crawford, Catherine. "Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form: Resource #36-8: William H. Thompson House/Holy Names Convent-Academy." Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, 1983.

Dwyer, Michael. "Maryland Historical Trust Inventory Form: Resource #36-8: William H. Thompson House/Holy Names Convent-Academy." M-NCPPC, 1975. Photograph.

Farquhar, Roger Brooke. *Old Homes and History of Montgomery County, Maryland*. Washington, DC: Judd & Detweiler, 1962.

Laas, Virginia Jeans (Ed.). *Wartime Washington: The Civil War Letters of Elizabeth Blair Lee*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991.

Montgomery Journal, "Girl's School Hit as Rolls Decline," 2-12-1988.

Nalewajk, Joyce. *Woodside, The Early Years: From Forest to the Founding of the Railroad Suburb*. Woodside Civic Association, 1991.

Proctor, John Clagett. *Washington, Past and Present: A History*. Including Biographical Sketches of Prominent Citizens. New York: Lewis Publishing Company, 1930.

The Riggs Family of Maryland, pp328-331.

Robinson & Associates, *Historic Structure Report, Anderson Cottage, United States Soldiers' and Airman's Home*, 1985.

Scott, Pamela, and Antoinette J. Lee. *Buildings of the District of Columbia*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Smith, Kathryn Schneider (ed). *Washington at Home: An Illustrated History of Neighborhoods in the Nation's Capital*.

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic William H. Thompson

and/or common Holy Names Convent-Academy

2. Location

street & number 711 Persinhing Dr. not for publication

city, town Silver Spring vicinity of congressional district 13th

state Maryland county Montgomery

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Sister of Holy Name of Jesus and Mary, Inc.

street & number 711 Pershing Dr. telephone no.:

city, town Silver Spring state and zip code Maryland, 20901

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County Courthouse liber 560

street & number folio 445

city, town Rockville state Md.

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title MNCPPC Historic Sites Inventory

date 1976 federal ☒ state ☒ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Park Historian's Office

city, town Rockville state Md.

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house has been greatly enlarged and remodeled but basically it is a large, two-story Victorian structure of frame construction. The main part has large, external chimneys and is capped with a slate, mansard roof. There are three, arched dormer windows projecting from this roof on the west side.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. Significance

Survey No.

M:36-8

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates circa. 1859

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The William Thompson house is significant as an example of Victorian architecture typical of that constructed in Montgomery County from the mid-nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. The house was probably built by George Riggs about 1859.¹ Riggs was vice-president of the Metropolitan National Bank.² George built his house on a tract of land referred to as "Girl's Portion" which he purchased in December of 1858 from James and Mary Ann Reynolds.³

In July of 1864, George and his wife, Janet, sold the house to Joseph Bryan for \$22,000.⁴ Bryan immediately sold the house to William Thompson.⁵ William had recently retired from the gas-fitting and plumbing business in which he had been quite successful.⁶ William died in July of 1896 leaving his entire estate to his wife, Helen Lucretia Thompson.⁷ Helen continued to live in the house until her death in May of 1923 at which point the house was willed to her sister, Sarah L. Pratt (William and Helen had no children).⁸

Sarah sold the house in June of 1924 to Constance Jordon.⁹ In December of 1931 the house was, following Constance's and her husband, Eldridge's, default on the mortgage. The house was then described as a frame dwelling containing fifteen or more rooms and four baths, with "all the modern improvements" including electricity. Also on the property was a small, single story dwelling, a garage and various other outbuildings.¹⁰ The house was sold to Ruth Money for \$10,000.¹¹ Ruth immediately sold the property to Evans-Reid Corporation who sold the house on a two acre lot (sub-dividing the remaining acreage) in 1933.¹² The house then became the property of the present owners, Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, Inc.¹³

¹The date given is based on the date the land was purchased, the date that it first appears on the tax records with improvements and the fact that Portrait & Biographical Records of the 6th Congress mentions the house which Thompson purchased formerly the home of George Riggs.

²Portrait & Biographical Records of the 6th Congress, p.768.

³Deed JGH 7/199, Mont. Co. Land Records.

⁴Deed EBP 1/281, "

⁵Deed EBP 1/284, "

⁶Portrait & Biographical Review, p.769.

⁷Will GCD 2/365, MC. Register of Wills

⁸Will HCA 26/427, "

⁹Deed 354/29, M.C. Land Records

¹⁰Equity #6115, 48/468

¹¹Deed 532/108, M.C. Land Records

¹²Deed 532/109 & 527/495

¹³Deed 560/445

9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No.

M:36-8

Mont. Co. Judgement Records
Mont. Co. Land Records
Mont. Co. Register of Wills
Portrait & Biographical Record of the 6th Congress

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 61,647 sq. ft.

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale _____

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

B

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Zone Easting Northing

C

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

E

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

F

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

G

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

H

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Catherine Crawford

organization Mont. Co. Historic Preservation Comm. date 1/83

street & number telephone

city or town Rockville state Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Shaw House
21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST WORKSHEET

NOMINATION FORM

for the
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME					
COMMON: Holy Name Academy-Convent					
AND/OR HISTORIC: Wm. H. Thompson House					
2. LOCATION					
STREET AND NUMBER: 711 Pershing Drive					
CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring					
STATE: Maryland			COUNTY: Montgomery		
3. CLASSIFICATION					
CATEGORY (Check One)		OWNERSHIP		STATUS	
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object		<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both		Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment		<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum		<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	
				<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____	
4. OWNER OF PROPERTY					
OWNER'S NAME:					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:		
5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION					
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:					
Montgomery County Courthouse					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:		
Rockville			Maryland		
Title Reference of Current Deed (Book & Pg. #):					
6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS					
TITLE OF SURVEY:					
DATE OF SURVEY: <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local					
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:					
STREET AND NUMBER:					
CITY OR TOWN:			STATE:		

M:36-8

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house has been greatly enlarged and remodeled but basically it is a large, two-story Victorian structure of frame construction. The main part has large, external chimneys and is capped with a slate, mansard roof. There are three, arched dormer windows projecting from this roof on the west side.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

M.36-8

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

Acreage Justification:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Michael F. Dwyer, Senior Park Historian		
ORGANIZATION M-NCPPC	DATE 6/2/75	
STREET AND NUMBER: 8787 Georgia Ave.		
CITY OR TOWN: Silver Spring	STATE Maryland	

12. State Liaison Officer Review: (Office Use Only)

Significance of this property is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Signature

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House (c.1859)
711 Pershing Drive



Current view of front elevation.

Photographer: Elizabeth Jo Lampl, Robinson & Associates, 8-1989.

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive



Rear facade of mansard roofed block (center) with mid-20th century addition at right.
Photographer: Joyce DeLaurentis, M-NCPPC, 5-1998

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive



Front view of house, taken between 1924 and 1931 when the property was owned by Eldridge Jordan. Roadway at right is today's Pershing Drive.

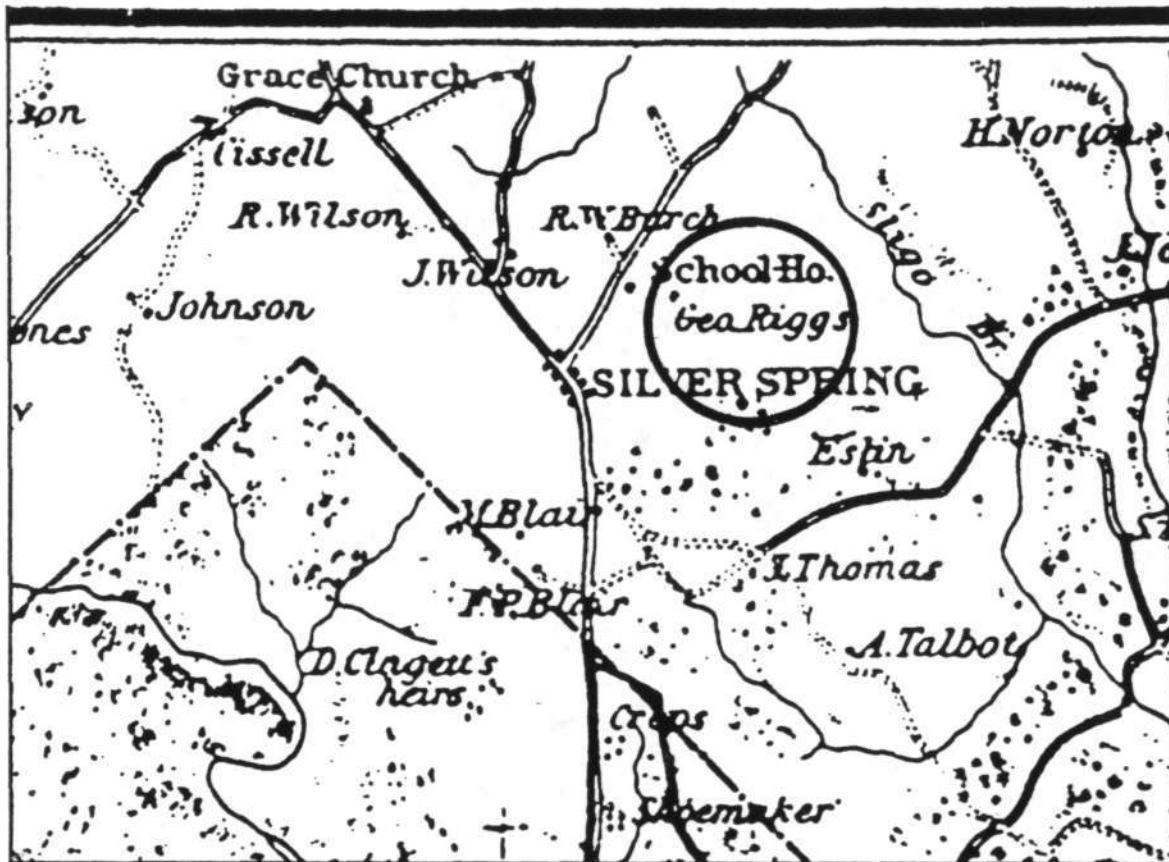
Source: National Photo Company, Jack Hewitt Collection

CONTINUATION
M: 36/8
Riggs-Thompson House



George Washington Riggs

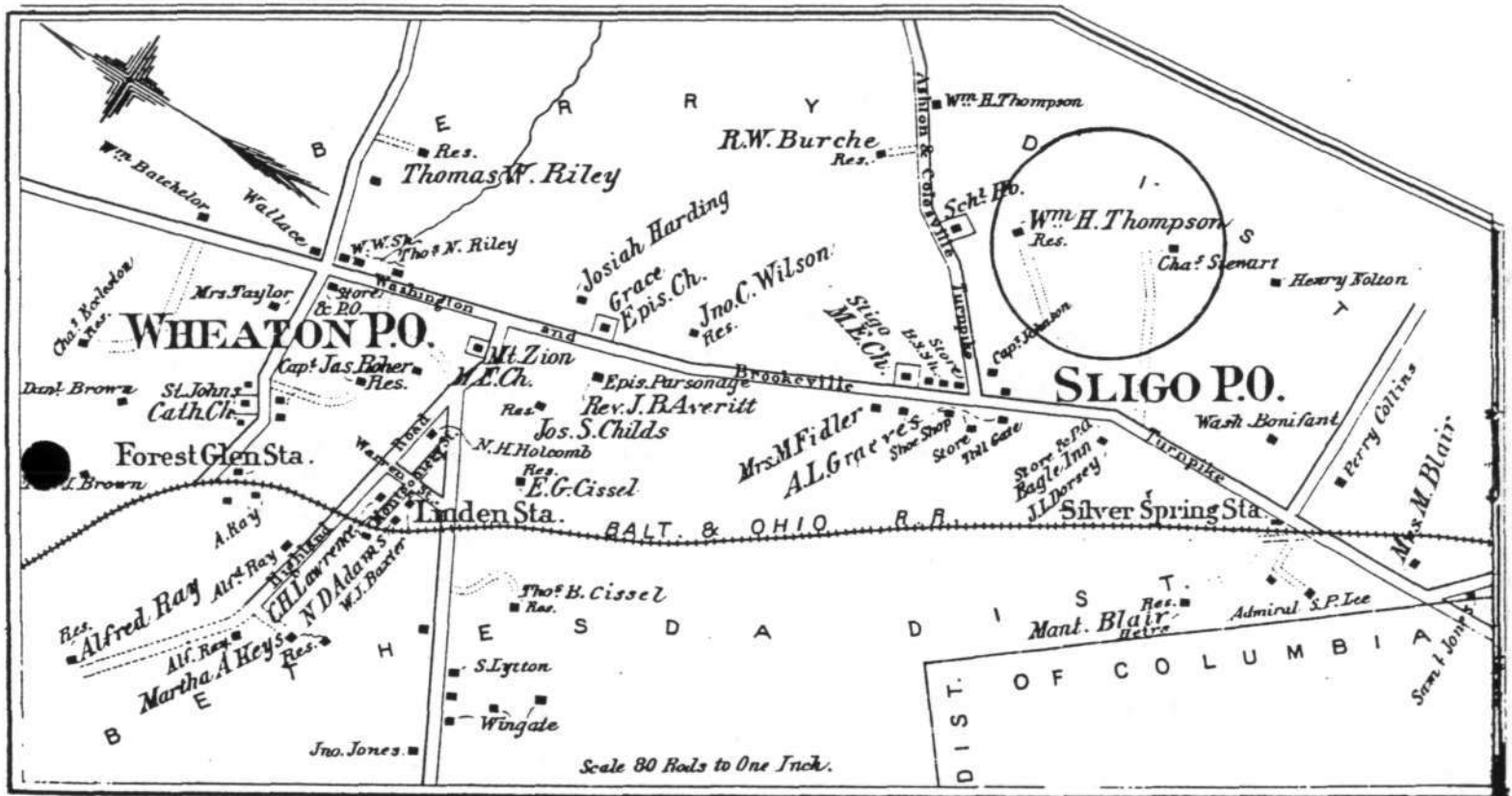
CONTINUATION SHEET
M. 36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive



George Washington Riggs created his country estate after purchasing land in the Sligo area in January 1857. Here he operated a working farm known for its fine-blooded cattle. Across Georgia Avenue, were the Blair family residences: Montgomery Blair's *Falklands*, and Francis Prescott Blair's *Silver Spring*. The triangular shaped D.C. boundary is seen at left.

Source: *Map of Defenses of Washington*, Atlas to Accompany Official Records of Union and Confederate Armies, 1861-1865. Library of Congress.

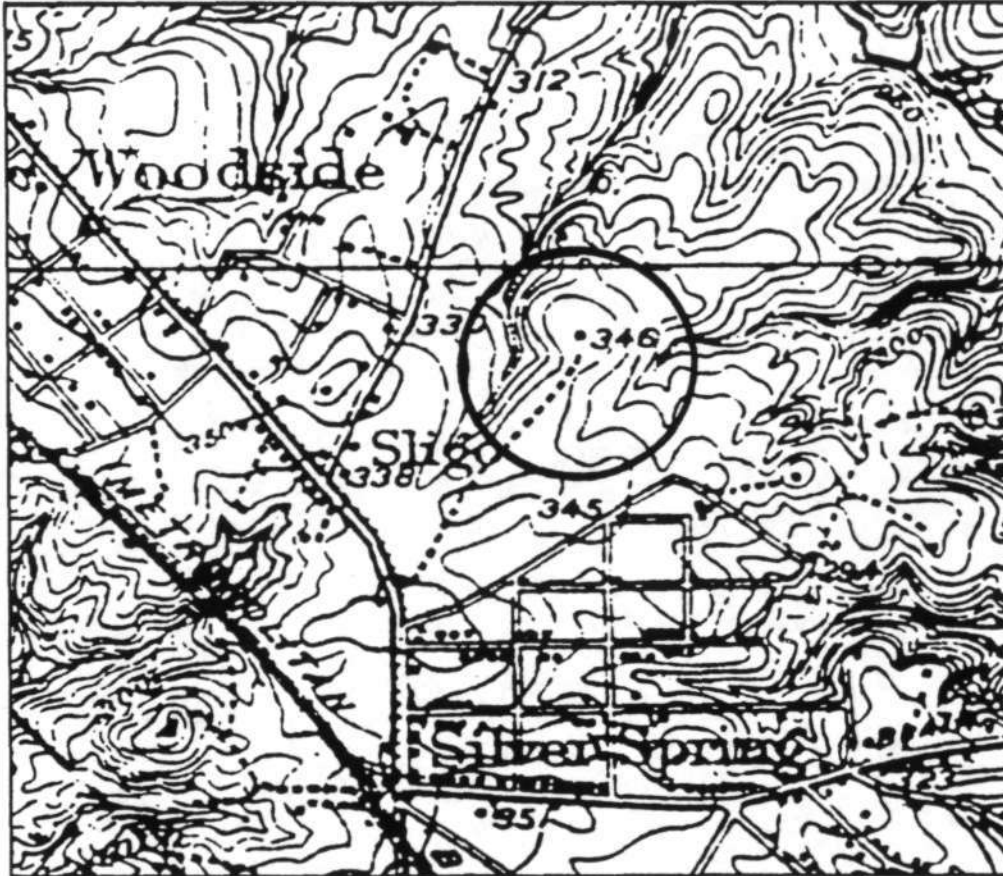
CONTINUATION SHEET
M 36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive



William H. Thompson purchased the Riggs estate in 1864 and lived here until his death in 1896. The 160-acre estate was bounded on the east by the Washington-Brookeville Turnpike (Georgia Avenue) and on the north by the Ashton-Colesville Turnpike (Colesville Road).

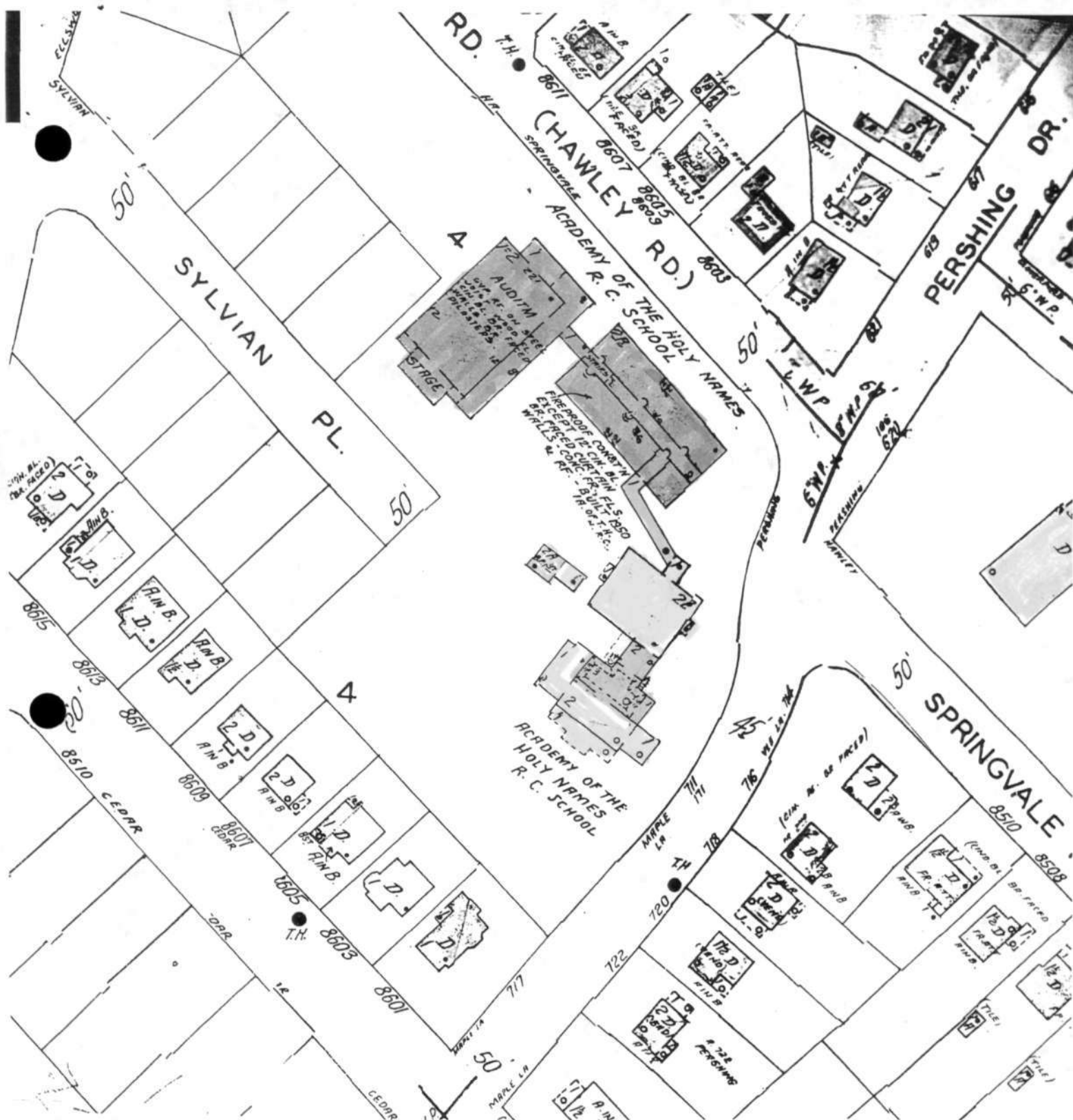
Source: Hopkins, G. M. *Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington, Including Montgomery County, Maryland.* 1879.

CONTINUATION SHEET
M36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive



Helen Thompson continued to live at the estate until 1923. As shown on this 1917 map, the house is situated on a knoll overlooking a branch of Sligo Creek (present site of Ellsworth Drive). The house was accessed from Georgia Avenue by a long driveway which is the approximate location of Pershing Drive. By this time, the southern boundary of the estate was Bonifant Street, in the subdivision known as Silver Spring Park.

Source: United States Geological Survey Map, 1917.



Riggs-Thompson House, 711 Pershing Drive
Existing Buildings

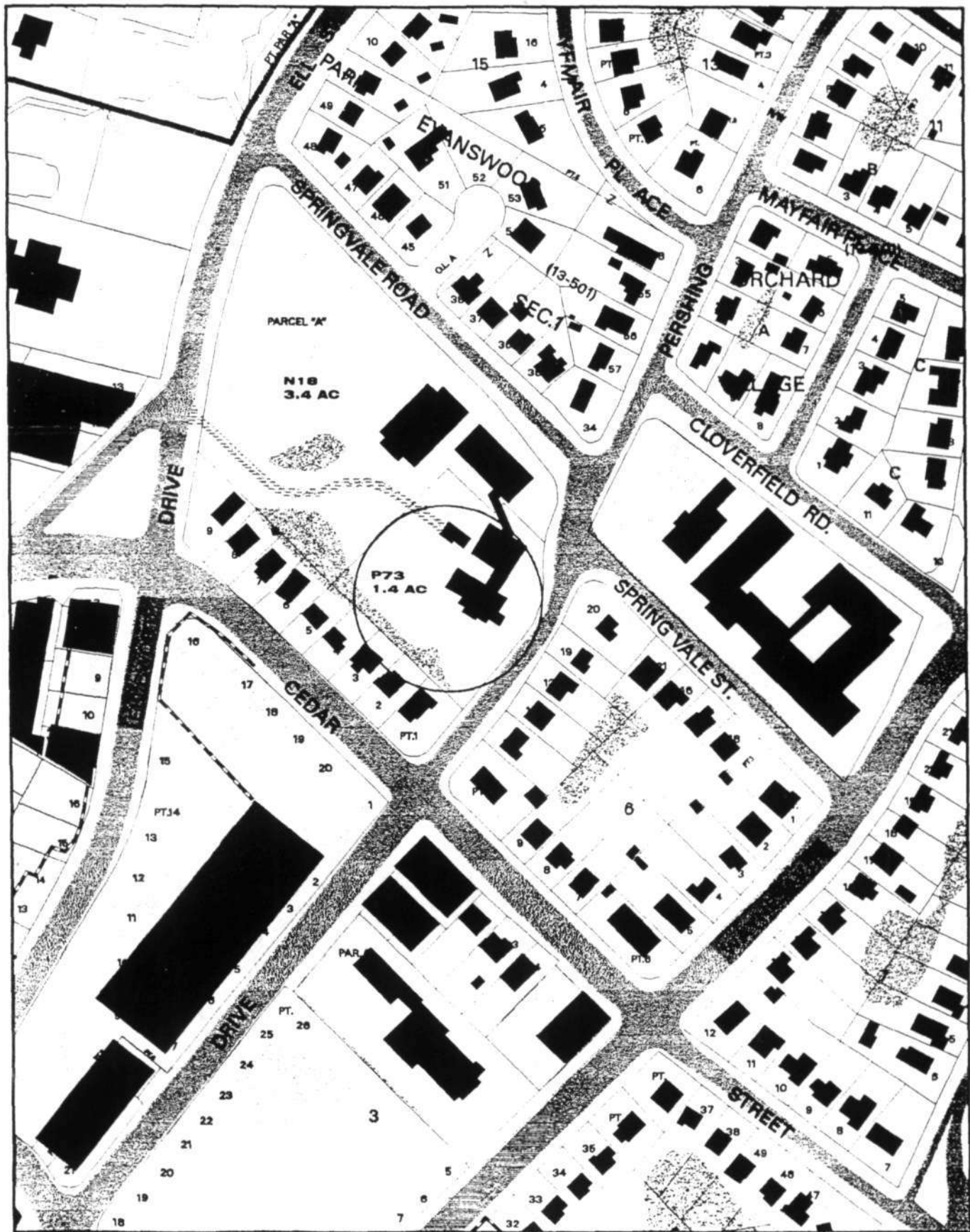
M:36-8

Construction Materials:

- Brick
- Frame
- Concrete Block

Source: Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1963

Vicinity Map for Riggs-Thompson House (36/8) M:36-8



Map compiled on April 30, 1998 at 5:16 PM

DISCLAIMER

The planimetric, property, and topographic information shown on this map is based on copyrighted Map Products from the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and may not be copied or reproduced without written permission from M-NCPPC.

Key Map



0 Research & Technology Center 200



CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive



Looking northeast, aerial view showing Riggs-Thompson property before development. Photograph taken c1924-1925 before the estate was developed. Georgia Avenue and B&O Railroad cross in the foreground.

Source: National Photo Company, Jack Hewitt Collection

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36'8 Riggs-Thompson House (c.1859)
711 Pershing Drive



Current view of front elevation.

Photographer: Elizabeth Jo Lampl, Robinson & Associates, 8-1989

CONTINUATION SHEET

M:36/8 Riggs-Thompson House
711 Pershing Drive



Rear facade of mansard roofed block (center) with mid-20th century addition at right.
Photographer: Joyce DeLaurentis, M-NCPPC, 5-1998.



NAME Wm. H. THOMPSON HSE (ITALY NAME
LOCATION 711 PERSHING DR, SILVER SPRING, MD.
FACADE S

PHOTO TAKEN 6/2/75

M. RUYER



M: 36/8 Rigg-Thompson House
711 Rushing Dr.
5/7/98
J. DeLaurentis

NORTH ELEVATION



M: 36/8 Rigg-Thompson Home
711 Parshing Drive
5/7/98
J. DeLaurentis

SOUTH ELEVATION



M: 36/8 Riggs-Thayssen House
711 Pashong Dr.
5/2/98
J. DeLauro

REAR ELEVATION OF ORIGINAL
C1858 BRICK SECTION